

Marsy's Law for Wisconsin: Support continues to grow as organization partners with local victims' advocates

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Contact: Brian Reisinger
[715-579-9679](tel:715-579-9679)
br@platform-communications.com

Madison, Wisconsin – The bipartisan coalition in favor of Marsy's Law for Wisconsin continues to grow, and recent partnerships with local victims' advocates have generated additional attention around the statewide effort to update Wisconsin's Constitution to ensure equal rights for crime victims.

With the publication of letters to the editor, op-eds, and local news coverage, the coalition has enjoyed broad and growing support and now boasts a growing list of over [200 key endorsements](#). Most recently, Marsy's Law for Wisconsin partnered with local victims' advocates to sponsor the "[Walk a Mile in Her Shoes](#)" event in Green Bay.

Check out what our supporters and partners are saying about the event:

Teri Jendusa Nicolai, Marsy's Law for Wisconsin state chairwoman on WBAY Action 2 News: "People don't realize how often people survive sexual assault or domestic violence, they don't realize that it's in their own neighborhoods and their own backyards, and awareness means action."

Marsy's Law for Wisconsin supporter Brown County Chief Deputy Todd

Delain on [CBS Local 5 This Morning](#): “Awareness is critical; that we have people that understand that this is happening in our community, and we need to take it seriously... This is an outstanding event—really important to bring awareness to such an important topic.”

Koren Petersen, Communications & Development Coordinator of Golden House, Inc. in an [interview with the Green Bay Press Gazette](#): “It’s really just a wonderful thing... all the people who are standing up to support victims in our community and to support survivors... It’s just a really great thing to be part of this community, and we have all of the people supporting the event by walking, but also all of our sponsors; and this year we have a new sponsor, our high heeled sponsor Marsy’s Law, so we’re really excited about that too.”

Marsy’s Law for Wisconsin, introduced as Assembly Joint Resolution 47/Senate Joint Resolution 53, is authored by Senator Van Wanggaard (R-Racine) and Representative Todd Novak (R-Dodgeville). With a broad and growing bipartisan statewide coalition supporting it, the legislation has passed key committees in both the State Senate and State Assembly and is now awaiting votes by both full chambers of the Legislature.

You can read more on Teri’s story of survival [here](#) and find facts on Marsy’s Law for Wisconsin’s bipartisan legislation below:

- **Marsy’s Law for Wisconsin follows a proud tradition in our state of protecting victims’ rights, unlike many other states.** Wisconsin already has a constitutional amendment on victims’ rights that passed in 1993, and was the first state in the nation to pass a Crime Victims’ Bill of Rights. The state also is recognized as having some of the strongest statutory rights for victims in the country. This means the changes we are proposing are about making sure victims’ rights are truly equal alongside the constitutional rights of the accused – nothing more, nothing less.
- **Marsy’s Law for Wisconsin strengthens rights that already exist in Wisconsin.** The proposed amendment would do two things: Elevate certain rights currently under state statute to be fully constitutional rights, and strengthen other rights that are already part of the Constitution. An example of a right that is the law under state statute but needs to be elevated to the Constitution is the right to put victim restitution payments ahead of any dollars owed to the government. An example of a current constitutional right that needs clarification is the right to be

heard throughout the legal process, including release, plea, sentencing, disposition, parole, revocation, expungement, or pardon – as opposed to just disposition.

· **Nearly 80 percent of Wisconsinites support updating our state Constitution to ensure equal rights for crime victims.** A poll of Wisconsinites found that nearly 80 percent support updating our state Constitution to ensure equal rights for crime victims. More than 80 percent support a victim's right to speak up at more points in the criminal justice process, and 68 percent said they were "more likely" to support a state legislative candidate who supported Marsy's Law for Wisconsin. The bipartisan legislation must be passed in the state Legislature twice, then by voters at the ballot box.

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About Marsy's Law for Wisconsin

Marsy's Law for Wisconsin is a grassroots coalition that has developed a unique proposal to give victims of crime equal rights in our state, building on Wisconsin's laws and history of leading on this issue. Marsy's Law is named after Marsalee "Marsy" Nicholas of California who was stalked and killed by her ex-boyfriend in 1983. Only one week after her death, Marsy's mother and brother, Henry T. Nicholas, walked into a grocery store where they were confronted by the accused murderer. The family, who had just come from a visit to Marsy's grave, was unaware that the accused had been released on bail. In an effort to honor his sister, Dr. Nicholas has made it his life's mission to give victims and their families constitutional protections and equal rights.

Victims and supporters interested in sharing their stories can email Wisconsin@marsyslaw.us.